

# The Seattle Times

88 PAGES

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 13, 1973

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**SLAIN HITCHHIKER** — The grieving family of Katherine Devine, 14, whose body was found near Olympia last week, wants other young people warned against hitchhiking because "nobody else should go through this." A 16.

A 16 The Seattle Times Thursday, December 13, 1973

## Grieving family of slain girl wants others warned

### 2 murders top long list of hitchhiking-related crimes

Katherine Merry Devine and abduction were reported apparently was the second ed between March 1, 1972, and November 1, 1973, the young hitchhiker in two years to be sexually as- patrol said. Many hitchhiking victims assaulted and then murdered.

The slaying of Laura L. Brock, 20, also is unsolved. Also, many police departments do not keep track of Her nude body was found on a Whidbey Island logging road September 14, 1972. hitchhiking-connected offenses.

The State Patrol reports that since hitchhiking was legalized May 23, 1972, more than 100 morals offenses connected with hitchhiking have been reported in Washington.

A total of 337 offenses connected with hitchhiking—including 72 armed robberies and assault, theft

and abduction were reported between March 1, 1972, and November 1, 1973, the patrol said. Many hitchhiking victims have not reported offenses. Also, many police departments do not keep track of hitchhiking-connected offenses. For example, the Seattle Police Department kept track only during a 10-month period last year after hitchhiking was legalized.

There are no statistics available in this state to compare the number of hitchhiking-connected offenses committed before and after the legalization.

By ERIK LACITIS

"I want you to put this on the front page. Maybe if some other kids could see the article . . . maybe they would learn about hitchhiking."

A few minutes earlier yesterday, Mrs. Sally Devine had finished talking to a team of investigators from the Thurston County sheriff's office about her daughter, Katherine, 14, found dead last Thursday near Olympia.

Mrs. Devine was in her modest Greenwood-area home at 743 N. 92nd St., surrounded by grieving relatives. She and her oldest daughter, Sherrie, 16, remembered the weekend of November 25 when Katherine ran away from home.

**THE YOUNG** hitchhiker was found partly disrobed in McKenny Park in the Capitol State Forest southwest of Olympia four or five days after she apparently was raped and murdered and 10 days after she was reported missing.

The King County medical examiner's office is coordinating laboratory tests to determine exact cause and manner of Katherine's death.

Sherrie said her sister had run away from home because of a variety of personal problems. Katherine just had broken up with her boy friend, her parents' separation 2 1/2 years ago still upset her, the family was not well off financially.

"She said, 'That's it, I'm going to visit my cousin in Oregon,'" Sherrie related.

Sherrie said her sister frequently had hitchhiked "all over the place" without encountering trouble.

A few days before Halloween, Sherrie noted, Katherine had tried to hitchhike to Oregon — but returned from Olympia.

**WHAT KIND** of a girl was Katherine?

Her mother remembered the 14-year-old as "implisive . . . if she saw a pair of shoes she liked she had to have them now."

Sherrie said her sister was "pretty . . . she always had a lot of boys chasing her, (but) she devoted herself to one person."

She fed a starving stray cat back to health. Now it's the family cat.

Sherrie hopes that Katherine's brutal death will deter other teen-agers who want to hitchhike. The older sister said the family plans to start a campaign to put the hitchhiking issue before voters.

"Nobody else should go through this thing," Sherrie said.

**THE LAST** person known to have seen Katherine here that Sunday was Gail Schwendeman, 14, a childhood friend and schoolmate at Ingraham High School. Gail saw Katherine thumbing a ride at North 92nd Street and Aurora Avenue North about 1:30 p. m. November 25. After about two minutes, Gail



Katherine M. Devine

said a 1953 Dodge blue-grey panel truck driven by a heavy-set man with shoulder-length black hair stopped for the girl.

Gail remembered Katherine waving good-bye to her from the truck. Then Gail notified Mrs. Devine that her daughter had run away. Katherine's mother called the Seattle Police Department about 3 p. m. that

day. Mrs. Devine said a patrolman stopped by her home a short time later but refused to take a report.

"He told me there was a 24-hour waiting period for reporting runaways," Mrs. Devine said. "So I called the next morning, and they took it."

A spokesman for the department said today that there is no 24-hour waiting period for reporting runaway juveniles, although there is one for reporting missing adults.

**TEN DAYS** after she began her hitchhiking trip Katherine was found dead by a man and wife hired by the Department of Natural Resources to clean up debris around McKenny Park.

"I was picking up litter when I saw her lying face down," the woman worker said. "I thought somebody had played a joke and made a dummy, you know."

She said she thought a motorcycle gang that had held beer parties in the area had pulled a prank.

The girl's hair had been parted by the rain. "From the back," the woman said, "she looked like one of those little dolls."

A spokesman for the Thurston County sheriff's office said yesterday it needs information concerning Katherine's activities or about the man who picked her up Sunday. Seattle homicide detectives are aiding in the investigation.

"We've got her leaving here (Seattle) and finding her there dead. Everything else is a mystery," the spokesman said.

She said Katherine wanted to be a Sunday school teacher and planned to enter the ministry.

There was a Bible on her bedroom dresser yesterday. A poster showed a flower with the single word "Love."

Another poster was of a barn on which had been painted "Get right with God."

Katherine loved animals.



KATHERINE DEVINE  
Throat was slit

## Theories In Death Of Seattle Girl, 14

Thurston County sheriff Don Redmond said yesterday it is possible that 14-year-old Katherine Merry Devine of Seattle was sexually assaulted, murdered and then left where her body was found south of Olympia last Thursday.

The girl, daughter of Sally and William L. Devine, was last seen hitchhiking at N. 92nd Street and Aurora Ave. N. on Nov. 25 by two classmates at Ingraham High School, according to Redmond.

The Thurston County coroner, Hollis Fultz, said the girl died of strangulation or by a knife wound. Her throat had been slit. Katherine's body was found in a wooded area of McKenny State Park, 12 miles south of Olympia, by park employees. The time of death was set at Dec. 1 or 2 by Fultz.

Redmond said the case may have been one of attempted rape and then homicide, with the body later dumped in the park. The girl's clothing had been partially removed.

She had been wearing bell-bottom blue denim pants, a peasant blouse, an imitation suede coat and "waffle stomper" shoes.

The sheriff said Katherine, who would have been 15 on Christmas Day, had broken up with her boyfriend recently and may have been hitchhiking to Oregon where she had friends.

Redmond and Thurston County detectives remained in Seattle last night investigating the case with the aid of Seattle homicide detectives.

# Seattle Girl, 14, Slaying Victim

BY MARTIN WORKS

A body found Thursday in a campground near Olympia was identified yesterday as that of 14-year-old Katherine Merry Devine of Seattle, who reportedly was hitchhiking near Aurora Avenue N. and N. 90th Street when last seen Nov. 26.

Authorities said the young woman's throat had been cut.

Thurston County Sheriff Don Redmond called the slaying "a very vicious crime."

Redmond and several deputies arrived in Seattle last night to work with Seattle Police Department homicide detectives in attempting to trace the teen-ager's movements since Nov. 26.

Her parents, Mr. and Mrs. William L. Devine of Seattle, reported her as a runaway on that date.

Thurston County deputies were working on the case in the Olympia area.

The body was found Thursday morning in the McKenny Park area of the Capitol State Forest, a short distance southwest of Olympia.

At first authorities be-

lieved the body was that of a woman in her twenties.

A relative identified the remains yesterday.

An autopsy indicated the teen-ager had been dead for several days before being discovered.

Redmond said the teen-ager, an Ingraham High School student, would have been 15 years old on Christmas Day.

The sheriff asked that anyone who might have seen the young woman after Nov. 26 contact his office or the Seattle Police Department.

The teen-ager was described as five feet, eight inches tall, weighing about 120 pounds, and having shoulder-length brown hair, parted in the center. She was wearing "waffle stomper" boots, a peasant blouse, navy bell-bottom pants, and an imitation suede coat with fur trim.

Sheriff Redmond said the killing had reaffirmed his opposition to the recent liberalization of the hitchhiking law in this state.

"I'm really against the hitchhiking laws of the State of Washington," Redmond told a reporter.



KATHERINE MERRY DEVINE

A Recent Photo

## Attempt Now To Trace Girl's Path

Thurston County sheriff's deputies were in Seattle Wednesday trying to pick up the trail of a 14-year-old Seattle girl who was found dead last week in woods near Littlerock.

After four days of investigation, the body Tuesday was identified as Katherine Merry Devine, 743 North 92nd Street, Seattle.

Sheriff Don Redmond said Miss Devine was last seen November 26 at 92nd and Aurora at her home. The sheriff added the young woman had had a fight with her boyfriend, and told girlfriends she was hitchhiking south to Oregon.

Redmond said Wednesday morning from Seattle that deputies are investigating reports of a vehicle picking the Devine girl up.

According to the sheriff, November 26 was not the first time the girl had hitchhiked south. She is known to have gone to Oregon once before, and there are also reports she spent some time in Olympia Redmond said.

Last Thursday the body of Miss Devine was discovered lying face down and partially nude near the parking area of Margaret McKenny Park.

Redmond said his men are trying to pick up the Devine girl's trail and work back to December 1, the day deputies estimate she was killed.

Four Thurston County deputies are working in Seattle with that city's police department.

Thurston County Coroner Hollis Fultz said Wednesday morning he has not received an autopsy report, but hoped to get it in the morning mail.

In Olympia, deputies were completing identification of the girl and checking out local leads. Although Inspector Charles Graef said the body has been identified, he added that deputies plan to use dental charts and footprint records to complete and further confirm the identification.

A n uncle, grandfather and Seattle friend were in Olympia Wednesday to identify the body.

In a false lead Tuesday, deputies went to a Lacey drive-in restaurant where a boot was reported in one of the garbage containers. Miss Devine's left boot, purse and wallet have never been found.

Officers emptied the garbage can, sifted through the refuse and found a boot — but it was a man's and had no connection with the case.

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